Numb. 53.

THE OBSERVATOR.

On the Extraordinary Price of Coals at London. *On the Taking the* French *Fort and Bankers at* Newfound-Land. *On the* Venetians *Resentment of the* French *Insolencies. On the* French *Kings present Frenzy. On the Lady* Tyrconnel's *Arrival in* Ireland.

From Wednesday October the 21st, to Saturday October the 24th, 1702.

Country-m. I Find a general Complaint at *London* of a great *Grievance* in relation to the *Poor* of that City; they tell me that *Coals* are held up to 40s. the Chaldron, so that the *Poor* must Suffer extreamly this Winter by want of *Firing*, which is as Necessary and Helpful to the Support of Humane Life, as *Meat* and *Drink*; and the People tell me, That there is no real Necessity of such a Dearness of Coals. Pray, Sir, what is your Opinion of this Case?

Obs. We have many good Laws in *England* against *Monopolizers* and *Hoarders* of *Provision*, under which Head Coals may very well be reckoned; for tho' we cannot Eat Coals as Food, we can neither Eat nor Drink without them; and that which Prepares Meat for the Stomach, is equal to the Meat it self: If you have never so much Money, and are in a place where Provision is not to be Purchased, your Money signifies no more towards filling your Belly, or quenching your Thirst, than does a Brick-bat: If you have Meat and no Coals to Dress it, you are in the same Condition as if you had Coals and no Meat. *Scarcity* is an Affliction which ought to be born with Patience, as coming from the Hand of Providence; but 'tis a detestable sight to see Men *Starve* in the midst of *Plenty*: And it is notoriously known that there is at this present time a sufficient quantity of Coals to supply the Demands of that great City, and that they may be afforded at much easier Rates.

But 'tis the common practise of the Traders in that Commodity, at this Season of the Year, to lay up vast Quantities on purpose to Raise the Markets, and thereby to grind the Face of the Poor. When their great Ships arrive in the Pool from *Newcastle*, they take Coals enough out of 'em to lighten them, so that they may bring them to the Wharfs, where they lie as in Ware-Houses, in expectation of the Rise of the Markets.

Country-m. I wish, with all my Heart, the Bottoms of 'em would drop out before the Spring. But is there no Remedy for this Evil?

Obs. Without doubt, the Magistracy of the City of *London* is Empowered to Regulate the Price of Coals as they do the Price of Bread and Salt, and I would advise the *Poor* of that City to Petition the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen on that Account, that the *Poor* may not be Sacrificed to the Avarice of *Hucksters*, *Coalmongers*, *&c.* One Excuse they had for the Dearness of Coals in the Summer, was the Extravagant Wages of their Sailors, and that they were often Press'd from on Board their Ships into the Queens Service, which retarded their Voyage; but the Lord High Admiral having not many days ago publish'd an Order in the *Gazette*, Forbidding the Sea Commanders and Officers under Him in Her Majesties Service, to Press any Men for the future without further Orders, has put that Excuse out of doors, But pray what farther News from *London*?

Country-m. It's said that an Express is arrived from *Newfound-Land*, giving an Account that the Commodore of our Squadron there, has Destroy'd the chief Fort of the *French* in their Settlement at *Placentia*; as also that he has taken 30 of their Bankers, and has destroyed three *French* Men of War in their Harbours: This is a good piece of News; this is doing of Business. I would have that *Commodore* made an *Admiral*.

Obs. Things shall not be carried as you would have it. But I tell thee, honest Friend, this is a very good Job: The Plate Fleet will not make the *French* amends for the Loss of their Bankers: I have kept an Account of 125 Bankers, Homewards Bound, or to Market, which have been Taken this Season by our Ships of War, by the *English* and *Dutch* Privateers, or the *Middleburgh* Capers: Now suppose *France* sends Yearly to *Newfound-Land* 200 Bankers, which is the most we can expect in time of War, *France* has already lost five parts in eight of their Bankers, and of consequence, proportionably of its Fishery; for by this means *England* will this year thrust them out of Foreign Markets with their own Commodities; and this Loss is not easily Repaired by the *French* Merchants, for tho' the Duties in *France* upon Merchandize are Easy enough, they have so many other ways of Fleecing those *Vassals*, that a Merchant there, unless he keeps his Stock Undiscovered, pays at least 50 *per Cent.*

Again, By this Loss of the *French* Bankers, the People of *France* are brought under the greatest Hardships by want of Fish, which they are Obliged to Eat at certain Seasons: 'Tis a very pretty Religion which Obliges Men to Eat *One* sort of Food, and that whether they have it or no. This *Scarcity* of Fish in *France*, honest *Country-man*, will be a greater *Grievance* to those People, than the Scarcity of Coals to the *Londoners*, who may Burn Wood, or other Fuel, if they have it; but the poor *French* Vassals *must* Eat Fish, or Starve; for if they Eat any thing else, they believe they are Damned: Their Priests pretend to be Clerks of the *Green-Cloth* to God Almighty, whose Servants must Eat and Drink according to their Bill of Fare, and no otherwise. I thank God we have none of those Impositions in *England*, our Clergy only Direct us in the way to Heaven, they don't peep into our Pots, and oblige us to hearken to their Culinary Doctrines.

The Improvement may be made by this Advantage

vantage over the *French* at *Newfound-Land*, is obvious to any Man that is the leaſt acquainted with the Intereſt of *England* in relation to Commerce; we have now recovered a Trade by *Force*, which was taken from us by *Fraud*, and Fatal *Neglect* of the Intereſt of our Country, which Perſons employ'd in Negotiations of Peace, and Leagues, have either *Overlook'd*, or have been *Ignorant* of: For my part, for the good of my Country, I am willing to give the *French* t'other Plate Fleet, provided the whole Fiſhery of *Newfound-Land* may be in the *Engliſh* hands, which is indeed their *Due*, as well as *Advantage*. What other News have you pick'd up at *London*?

Country-m. The Foreign News gives us an Account of the great Diſſatisfaction of the Senate of *Venice* at the Inſolencies of the *French*, who threaten them with Hoſtilities becauſe they have put to Death ſome of their own Subjects who were convicted of State Crimes, and at the ſame time ſome Aſſaſſines murdered a *French* Gentleman who had been for ſome time in the Service of the State; which Barbarous Action is concluded to be done by the Influence of *French* Gold; but now I find 'tis the Opinion of moſt Wiſe Men, That the *Venetians* will Declare for the Emperour as ſoon as the *Engliſh* Squadron is Arrived in the Gulph.

Obſ. They might have done this ſooner, and thereby have ſaved their Reputation, which now has received ſuch a Stain that will not be wiped off in one Age; *Lewis* the 14th is a Beaſt of Prey, that is not to be ſatisfied but with Blood, no Articles are to be made with Hungry Perſons when the Proviſion is before them. A Tyrant, who can ſwallow whole Kingdoms for a Dinner, will make but a Breakfaſt of a Petty State; and by the Inſolencies of the *French* to the State of *Venice*, you may conclude the Vanity of thoſe Powers who ſeem to truckle to the Power of *France*, which ought, like the Devil, to be kept always at Defiance, and who will fly before you, if you Reſiſt him. 'Tis the Genius of the *French* Nation to be Inſolent over People Surpriz'd or in Fear; but none are more complaiſant to ſuch as hold 'em at the Staffs end, and threaten a vigorous Defence.

The *Venetians* had no Occaſion to wait the Motions of an *Engliſh* Squadron into the *Adriatick*, their own Naval Force is ſufficient to maintain the Soveraignty of thoſe Seas without any Auxiliary help; and without any Diminution to the Policy of other Nations, I may ſay, that the Naval Force of *Venice* is in as good Diſcipline as any in *Europe*, and have heretofore been a Terror to the *Ottoman Empire*; 'Tis true, that State is in a good Condition who has *England* to hold it's Back; but we are not bound to find Bladders to keep all the Powers of *Europe* from ſinking; if our Gracious Queen will be a Nurſing Mother to all *Europe*, ſhe'll have Children enough; yet there's no Reaſon ſhe ſhould ſubſiſt 'em all upon Charity.

The Vanity of *France* in intermedling with the Affairs of other Nations is peculiar to that People, tho' contrary to the Laws of Nations; and we have had Thouſands of Inſtances of *French* Aſſaſſinations; for in any Country where they have a Mind to take off a Perſon, if Gold will not carry the Point, Poiſon or the Dagger muſt effect it.

If the *Venetians* are come to themſelves ſo far as to be ſenſible of the *French* Inſolencies (for hitherto I thought them paſt feeling) 'tis hop'd they will ſuffer the *German* Forces in *Italy* to take Winter Quarters in their Territories, at the breaking up of the Campaign, otherwiſe they may taſte of the *French* Inſolencies by Land, as well as Sea: If the Forces under Prince *Eugene* carry this Point, this Winter will be as full of Action in *Italy* as was the laſt, in which the *Germans* got more from the *French* than they did in the Summer; tho' the Battel of *Luzara* is worthy to be Recorded, and it is of it ſelf worth the Charge of a Campaign.

Country-m. The *Paris* News tells us, That the *French* King is mad, that he cannot ſleep a Nights, and every Poſt Augments his Frenzy; he has ſo much Ill News of late, that he can no longer bear the Diſgraces of his Army, which are ſo Univerſal, that he knows not on what General to fix the miſmanagement; but moſt People Attribute it to his Fate, as being now Deſerted by his Devil, that hitherto has aſſiſted him in all his Enterprizes.

Obſ. 'Tis no wonder to hear of his Reſtleſs and Uneaſie Temper, who has been ſo *Bloody* and *Cruel* a Tyrant, who has Sacrificed Millions of Men, who has *Poyſon'd*, *Aſſaſſinated*, and *Betray'd*, every one that ſtood in his way to Empire. Can he Dream of any thing but Ghoſts, and Specters, and Images of thoſe Men he has Murder'd, and ſent out of the World on Racks and Gibbets? There is indeed ſome reaſon for his preſent Indiſpoſition, for the Condition of his Forces is perhaps worſe then ſome People think, he has received of late ſeveral Black Stories, which have quite drowned his Joy for the arrival of the Plate Fleet, and the Repulſe of the Confederate Forces at *Cadiz*. The Elector of *Bavaria* is already ſenſible of his Errour, and is finding means to make his Peace with the Empire; he talks no longer of a Crown, but is content to keep his Hereditary Honour if the Confederates will but conſent to it. The Affairs of *Poland* and *Sweden* ſticks alſo much on his Stomach, for a Peace in the *North* will effectually ſpoil his War in the *South*. In ſhort, his Affairs every where are in ſo bad a Condition, that if he be not *Mad*, I muſt needs ſay he has enough to make him ſo.

Country-m. Mr. *Obſervator*, your old Friend the Counteſs of *Tyrconnel* is got into *Ireland* before the Parliament met, ſhe has e'en given you the Slip; your Half-penny, Sir, it ſhakes I'll aſſure you.

Obſ. Thoſe that meaſure Arms with an *Engliſh Parliament*, will find themſelves very Short. Prithee what Place of Her Majeſties Dominions is out of the Reach of an *Engliſh Parliament*? What *Power*, what *Force* is Superiour to *Theirs*? I'll not depart from my Waget, no drawing of Stakes, honeſt *Country-man*, I will not give one Farthing to Secure it.

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